

Brooks E. Kleber Memorial Lecture in Military History

13th Annual Lecture Series

SPEAKING THROUGH SKULLS

Objects of Death and their Meanings in the Continental Army

Dr. Wayne Lee

Dowd Distinguished Professor of History, University of North Carolina

In 1779, General George Washington ordered one of his primary subordinates, Major General John Sullivan, to take “the war home to the enemy and break their morale.” Sullivan marched to destroy over 40 Iroquois towns allied with the British, including their stores, weapons, and fighting men. The American Continentals struggled through the dense woodland of central New York, fighting loyalists and Indian warriors at every turn, falling deep into a morass of savagery and a holocaust of burning villages. On Thursday, February 2, 2017, Dr. Wayne Lee of the University of North Carolina, will give a lecture entitled, “Speaking Through Skulls,” to explore how death-related objects reflect the way Europeans, Native Americans, and Colonists related to the violence around them throughout the American Revolution, including those involved in Sullivan’s Campaign.

Dr. Lee discovered the topic of understanding reactions to death through studying artifacts while researching Continental Army Soldiers' reactions to a "Golgotha" – a field of skulls and bones – during their 1779 campaign against the Iroquois. When he set out to understand what such objects related to death might have meant to those Soldiers, he discovered a surprising variety of magical beliefs, spiritual connections, and even an ancient Latin curse skull. Although we all die, how we think about death and the afterlife has profound implications for the way we respond to violence and how we use violence ourselves. In his lecture, Dr. Lee will explore how those Soldiers responded to death with their own forms of violence, and also how objects related to death served as means of communication, motivation, and spiritual power in eighteenth-century North America.

Dr. Wayne Lee is the Dowd Distinguished Professor of History at the University of North Carolina. He specializes in early modern military history and teaches military history from a full global perspective at the undergraduate and graduate level. In addition to his work in the classroom, he works with archaeology projects and recently published, *Waging War: Conflict, Culture, and Innovation in World History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), from a project in the mountains of northern Albania.

DATE: Thursday, February 2, 2017

TIME: Doors open at 6:30 PM and the talk begins at 7:15 PM. The question period concludes around 8:30 PM.

PLACE: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multipurpose Rooms

For updates and any last minute changes in meeting times/places, please check the USAHEC website: www.USAHEC.org or call the Information Desk: 717-245-3972.